754 the tiny horn in his hand, grasps the stick, and, after uttering maledictions against the person in question and saying his name, places the stick on his tongue, first lengthwise and then crosswise. After this manipulation in the pattern of a cross, he replaces the stick in the horn. When the traveler returns to his own village, the charm will take effect. If, on arriving, he is so careless as to sit down anywhere but on the bare ground, he will die. If he does sit on the bare ground, he will be safe.

If it is not the traveler whom our man wishes to harm, but someone in the traveler's village, the Bambara, after having gone through the afore-mentioned ritual proceedings against the enemy, will then seek out the traveler and engage him in polite conversation. Just as the traveler is about to take his leave, he will say to him: "Give my regards to So-and-So." When the returned traveler delivers the message, the person receiving it will suffer no harm if he repays in exactly the same way the compliments that have been conveyed to him; however, if he merely says "maraba" (thank you), he will die at once.

The so ma sama belongs to a category of magic weapons, which are especially and deservedly feared and which [150] the Bambara include under the general name, korti. There are endless korti, usually powders made of every imaginable and often repugnant ingredient (snake venom, the dung of wild animals, putrefied entrails from all kinds of corpses, etc.).

[278] Here, for instance, is the procedure used to make su-mugu. A very dry stalk of millet is inserted into the intestine of a dead animal through the anus and is left there long enough for it to become impregnated with the toxins produced by cadavers; it is then withdrawn and thoroughly dried before being pulverized. The resulting powder is kept in horns or boxes, either as it is or mixed with an ointment.

Many of these powders are put into the food or drink to be consumed by the victim. Various methods are employed for this purpose. A ready method is for the harmful powder -- notably su-mugu -- to be placed under a fingernail; then the

791 people in their hands; it is they who guide them and force them into obedience by predicting that those who resist will be afflicted with sickness, all kinds of calamities, and death. They are capable of all sorts of actions to preserve their prestige. They compound love philters, talismans, amulets, etc., but they are even better at compounding poisons: they are familiar with Strophanthus and their mixtures of hyena intestines, excrements of human corpses, and saliva taken from their mouths have terrible effects. [278]

791 648 These makers of rain and fair weather, who predict the future, cast lots, and cure the sick are all jealous of one another; there is no unity among them, and since cowardice is each one's chief virtue, there is no fear for the moment that they will press toward revolt. However, one should have no illusions, for that good-fellow smile on the lips of the Bambara in no way gives a true picture of their feelings. They hate the French because they are conquerors, and especially because the French have forbidden them to take slaves, sell, or even own them, and because they cannot administer justice as they please. The elders, who were formerly so powerful, feel their authority decreasing little by little, and there is fury in their hearts. They tremble and are afraid, they dread our rifles and cannons, whose rumblings still ring in their ears; they believe France to be even greater and more powerful than she is. But if some day a bold, enterprising, and audacious sorcerer should appear, he would succeed in creating a temporary union between these divergent groups no matter how slight a control he achieves. Then, without any doubt, we would see partial uprisings like those so frequent among the Moslems. The latter have deep in their hearts a hatred of everything that is not Islam and are never so happy as when they can march behind a fanatical Marabout; certain Frenchmen, well intentioned I like to believe, who refuse to admit thousands upon thousands of conclusive facts, continue nevertheless to help and pamper them, because they do not know the Koran and its teachings. Urged by I know not what naive philanthropy, they warm a snake which will turn against us every time it feels strong enough /37/ to raise its head, and they are preparing bloody days for our colonies in the fairly near future.

754 all functions to some degree, and it is to his own advantage to be con-
674 tent, in such an instance, with the position of solicitor; to whoever /52/ consults him, he indicates a celebrated fetish in the hands of one of his friends. The Bambara runs there without delay, and the master of the fetish, generously and heavily paid, takes the god out of its dirty goatskin. Onto one of its instruments (for a boli is manifold, and
[778] horns of cattle and antelopes, varnished with blood and brownish in color, are mingled with other objects in the shape of an eggplant, a turnip, a beetroot, a napkin ring, horse dung, etc., etc.), onto the sirikoun, which is almost always wrapped in a red shirt front, he ties firmly with a cotton thread seven straws five to seven centimeters long. The petitioner explains his visit, names the enemy on whom he wants to take vengeance, gives the reasons that compel him, and the master of the fetish recites his formulas, reddens his sirikoun with blood, and plasters onto its sides some spittle containing chewed kola nut.

754 If the sacrificial hen dies with spread wings and breast on the
674 ground and if when split in half the kola nut falls with the pulp down
787 and the round side up, the contemplated revenge is put off until later, for it is believed that the sacrifice has not been accepted. Our Bambara then goes away, relieved of a hen, two kola nuts, and at least 160 cauri, but nowise defeated; eight or ten days later he returns to the charge, unless he is too impatient to wait and consults a new sorcerer, who gives him orders to appeal to a fetish that shows a greater interest and has a more enterprising and less timid disposition.

If the hen dies on its side or on its back with its feet in the air, and if the pieces of kola nut fall on the round side with the pulp on top, the sacrifice is accepted, and this is the god's answer to the effect that he is taking his client's side. The enemy is thenceforth
754 placed under the boli a blara boli koro, the sanctioned expression;
674 he is placed under the avenging power of the fetish and is in its hands,
● 278 and the master of the idol, the sacrificer, and the people in his retinue plot to make him disappear at once. They undertake the task themselves as seldom as possible, however; they prescribe sacrifices and offerings to the client and give him a deer horn carefully tied up, telling him how to use it. This deer horn is nothing less than a horn

754 of poison, and the brown powder concealed in it is usually Strophanthus
674 seed /53/ crushed and kneaded into excreta of human corpses and
278 saliva taken from their mouths. This mixture is dried in the shade and then wrapped in a piece of hyena intestine, and to render the effects more immediate and certain, the fetish is brought out and placed on this meal and a sacrifice made. These sacrosanct preparations are made at night, if possible in the first quarter of the moon, and never on a Monday or Thursday, which are days of rest for the boli gods (1).

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1. The boli have two days' leave per week, and the Negroes also take this rest. However, they are broad-minded on this point even though for certain labors they ask the religious chief or a sorcerer to be allowed to work. As a rule a boli may not go out Sunday or Monday night nor on Wednesday or Thursday. They quite often do go out, however, but only by command of the fetish or a sorcerer. To bring out a fetish is to spend the night dancing the dance of the fetish, and when the initiates want to dance they always manage to do so. The boli are also sacrificed to on Monday and Thursday even though they are at rest. In theory there is rest for the fetishes; actually, the idea is loosely applied.

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674 To succeed and to keep from displeasing the fetish, who would then abandon your cause and turn against you, you must follow the prescriptions of the priest and members of his council to the letter; the omission of one rite, one sign, one formula, one imprecation, destroys the power of the poison contained in the horn, or at least renders it ineffective. Sometimes this powder is thrown and is called korti sou, and at other times it is poured and is called dounkono di.

754 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made
674 and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 If the korti are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish
278 has its own" -- the dounkono are still more numerous, for in addition to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

754 In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (dounkono di) or
673 throwing it (korti sou) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about
753 physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

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which I have before me, reports the same fact on the subject of the Komo boli. Moreover, this Father is a student of the Bambara -- when the Blacks of Ségou speak of him, they say, "Bamana-n-do," which means that he spoke and understood their language well.

throat of the victim of the general sacrifice: "Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na, God, great traitor, leave us, go away from us!" -- and the crowd repeated the blasphemy after him: "Alla djampa ba, i k'anbla, i ka bo an koun na!"

3. Boli Whose Power is Slight

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778 Since the boli do not all have the same strength and power, and fear is the basis and foundation of Bambara worship, they are not all equally honored. We will divide them into two main groups, those of "little power" and those of "great power," and we will end this chapter with a word on the talking boli, the prerogative of certain sorcerers, and on the sirikoun, another, quite special, kind of boli.

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278 By boli of little power I mean all evil fetishes which are basically not very terrifying, in the sense that it is thought that they very seldom cause anyone's death. Many of them are primarily medicines, and almost everyone has them. They are tails of cows, goats, dogs, and wild animals; they have no specific names and are generally called foura (2) ("medicine"). Additional "medicines" are the kana,

2. This name foura is given in a general way to all boli; I should therefore remark that the word "medicine" in the sense that we understand it, is not the exact translation of the word foura. This word is in itself untranslatable

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into our language and means a force, a conscious force, that opposes another conscious force which seeks to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The kana of which I speak are boli, and differ from the kana possessed by each powerful boli, which are no longer boli but parts of boli. Let us quickly admit that the word kana is as indefinite as the word foura, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

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[152] These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father foura or kana will make one for a modest sum varying between 5 kémés and a ba fla (5 kémés = 200 cowrie shells; ba fla = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose boli are innumerable, there is a whole group of people, the noumons (blacksmiths), the koulés (who dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the donzo (hunters), etc., who have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However, his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer, another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (dadjé in Bambara and best known to Europeans under the name of koba, a word of the Peul language) or for the wild pig /facochère/, for the panther or the

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